



Private Sewerage

With less funding, there will be an increase in the numbers of non-functioning wastewater systems which will lead to increased risk for contamination of drinking water sources, recreational waters and state waterways. Subsequently, the citizens of Louisiana (La) will experience an increased number of diseases resulting from exposure to pathogenic organisms commonly found in untreated wastewater as historically evidenced by epidemics of cholera, yellow fever, typhoid, parasitic infections, etc. Due to increased awareness and improved sanitation these scourges have been controlled in the United States. Reducing preventative services in this area can and will contribute to the degradation of the quality of life for the citizens of our state. More funding would best be spent on field inspectors, an up to date database, and increased education of the citizens of Louisiana. Money spent in these areas would provide more bang for our buck protecting public health.

Objective

Provide safe, effective means for treatment and disposal of wastewater in areas where there are no community based services available. Also, educate citizens regarding the importance of proper installation, use, and maintenance of individual wastewater treatment systems.

Performance Indicators

- Approved Systems Installed
- Applications taken
- % of structures with approved systems

Narrative

The Onsite Wastewater Program (OSWWP) permits, inspects, and monitors individual and small commercial onsite sewage treatment systems installed in areas of the state that have no community sewage connections available. The program manages the licensing, training, and testing of 479 individual onsite sewage system installers and licensure of 16 manufacturers of 354 different types of mechanical onsite wastewater treatment systems. Installer licensing

includes annual review of training requirements, endorsement by manufacturer, insurance and work product performance. The process for licensure of manufacturers includes an engineering review and approval of all systems to ensure compliance with National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) Standard 40. Additionally, the program monitors the ongoing maintenance program for these systems in a combined effort with cooperating local governments. The program is responsible for managing the sale, distribution, and tracking of sewage treatment plant identification tags. The OSWWP routinely provides guidance to regional and parish personnel on code clarification issues. The program consults with a yearly average of 20,000 property owners applying for permits to install and operate onsite wastewater systems. This typically results in 18,000 new installations and 1,700 refurbished systems. Plan reviews and site surveys are conducted by Sanitarians at local parish health units of which there are about 230 statewide. These Sanitarians simultaneously share programmatic responsibility for several public health programs. A determination of proper size and type of system for each application is made in efforts to properly treat wastewater generated by the proposed use. Sanitarians educate property owners on the proper operation and required perpetual maintenance of their system. This helps to ensure the property owner knows of his responsibility to keep his family and neighbors safe and healthy through protection of the environment. Sanitarians also conduct all sewage related complaint investigations on systems 40000 gpd and less. In the event of malfunctioning, non-compliant systems, enforcement action is taken against the responsible party(s) possibly resulting in injunctions, fines, penalties and upgrading of unapproved systems. Existing system inspections are conducted as requested and final verifications of installation for most systems are routinely performed by Sanitarians.

Better Health

The OSWWP serves citizens in La for which access to community wastewater treatment is unavailable. Our program meets the state goal for **Better Health** through preventative measures administered by OSWWP activities as described in the narrative. As federal regulations are becoming more stringent, the need for more advanced, complex sewage treatment options will be necessary. We intend to continue to provide individuals and communities with innovative approaches to solving advanced wastewater treatment needs. Increased manufacturer involvement, collaboration with local universities and industry promotes development of better treatment methods which will support **Better Health** and protection of **Natural Resources**. Through continued **Education** of La citizens we promote a culture of personal responsibility regarding their involvement in the protection of the environment. By providing an adequate means of wastewater treatment in areas that have no community infrastructure we promote **Diversified Economic Growth** in rural areas. With more

rural development in areas with no municipal utilities the need for individual technologies is apparent. The number of individual systems installed has doubled within the last 20 years which coincides with increasing population growth. The services of our program are needed more now than ever. Without continued oversight and regulatory activities associated with onsite wastewater, more people will be adversely affected by the impact of untreated wastewater.

All OSWWP activities are authorized, delineated, and/or mandated by LRS 40:4(A), 40:5(6)(9)(20) and 40:31.32 as set forth in the LAC Title 51, Louisiana Public Health Sanitary Code. Specific measurable services provided in 2008 include: 28,172 hours consulting with homeowners regarding the proper type of onsite sewage system to install; completed 17,063 applications to install new individual onsite wastewater systems to home owners; performed 17,184 site inspections to determine optimum design and placement for new onsite sewage systems; permitted the installation of 14,160 new onsite wastewater systems; inspected 17,821 existing onsite wastewater systems; abated 671 complaint investigations on onsite wastewater systems; monitored 4 installer training and certification classes; conducted 3 regional sessions training for sanitarians. Additionally, OSWWP engineering reviewed and approved 354 models of individual sewage systems meeting NSF Standard 40 (<http://www.nsf.org/.org>); licensed 16 manufacturers to market and sell systems in La; reviewed and approved plans and specifications on 18 proprietary effluent reduction devices; reviewed and approved plans and specifications on 16 limited use systems. Evidence of outbreaks of cholera and yellow fever occur in areas where there are masses of people and poor provision for sanitation—safe drinking water sources and treatment of wastes. With the current growth rate in the state, existing population density, and climate factors, favorable conditions exist that can lead to major outbreaks if any Sanitarian services were discontinued or lessened. While a move toward decentralized systems which serve multiple premises is encouraged, progress may be slow due to the responsibility of management and expense of these type systems. The benefit for support of the continued permitting and oversight of individual systems allows for the balance between population growth and economic development while protecting public health.